



PENNSYLVANIA JUVENILE JUSTICE

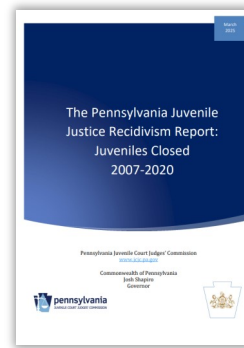
The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

Volume 36, Number 2

February 2025

PENNSYLVANIA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM REDUCES FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF REOFFENDING

This month, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) released its latest recidivism report, titled *The Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Recidivism Report: Juveniles Closed 2007-2020*, which highlights that the overwhelming majority of youth (87.4%) remain crime free two years after leaving the juvenile justice system. This statewide recidivism rate of 12.6% continues the trend of "post-JJSES initiation" recidivism rates being below the "pre-JJSES initiation" rate (21.6% for the years 2007-2010). Fifty-two counties (78%) had a recidivism rate in the post-JJSES initiation timeframe below their rate in the pre-JJSES timeframe.



Additional findings from the report highlight that:

1. Most youth who reoffend (60%) do so first as adults rather than juveniles, illustrating that recidivism is most likely to occur when the youth has already aged out of juvenile court jurisdiction.
2. The severity of a recidivists' first reoffense is more often than not (69%) a misdemeanor. Thus, among the small proportion of youth who reoffend, the offense is typically not serious enough to rise to the level of a felony charge, indicating a decrease in offense severity.
3. For the first time since the JCJC began tracking recidivism, public order offenses are the most common type of reoffense among the small percentage of youth who reoffend within two years of leaving the juvenile justice system.
4. The average length of time between closure and a new adjudication or conviction for youth who ultimately reoffend was longer this year than it has ever been before. The average number of months between closure and a recidivating event for youth closed in 2020 was 12.6 months. Readers should keep in mind that the two-year follow up period for the youth included in this recidivism report was during the COVID-19 pandemic and this likely played a role in the elongated time to recidivism.

To see the full report, please visit the [JCJC website](#).

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MYTH



VS.

FACT



The Juvenile Court Judges' Commission continues its monthly series, "Myth vs. Fact," which addresses common misconceptions about the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system. Using a combination of Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System data and scholarly research conducted by the field more broadly, this series will provide data-driven facts on all topics juvenile justice.

This month's installment addresses a circulated myth surrounding how Pennsylvania stacks up nationally in delinquency case rates and dispositions to out-of-home placement.

MYTH

Pennsylvania has some of the highest delinquency case rates and dispositions to out-of-home placement in the country.

FACT

Pennsylvania processed fewer delinquency cases per 1,000 youth than the national average, and dispositions to out-of-home placement increased less in Pennsylvania than nationally.

In November 2024, the National Center for Juvenile Justice released its *2022 Juvenile Court Statistics* report, allowing for comparison between Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system and the national stage.

Nationally, 16.5 delinquency cases per 1,000 youth in the population were processed during 2022 (the most recent year for which national data is available). **Pennsylvania's delinquency case rate during 2022 was lower than the national average** at 11.3 delinquency cases per 1,000 youth.

Additionally, Pennsylvania processed fewer delinquency cases per 1,000 non-Hispanic White and Black youth than the national averages in 2022:

- Nationally, 13.7 cases per 1,000 non-Hispanic White youth were processed
 - In Pennsylvania, the delinquency case rate for non-Hispanic White youth was 8.4
- Nationally, 40.5 cases per 1,000 non-Hispanic Black youth were processed
 - In Pennsylvania, the delinquency case rate for non-Hispanic Black youth was 34.2
- Nationally, 11.5 cases per 1,000 Hispanic youth were processed
 - In Pennsylvania, the delinquency case rate for Hispanic youth was 12.8

Nationally, dispositions to out-of-home placement increased by 15% between 2021 and 2022. In Pennsylvania, dispositions to out-of-home placement only increased by 5% during this same time period.

Reference

Hockenberry, S. & Puzanchera, C. (2024). *2022 Juvenile Court Statistics*. National Center for Juvenile Justice.

2025 James E. Anderson PENNSYLVANIA Conference on Juvenile Justice

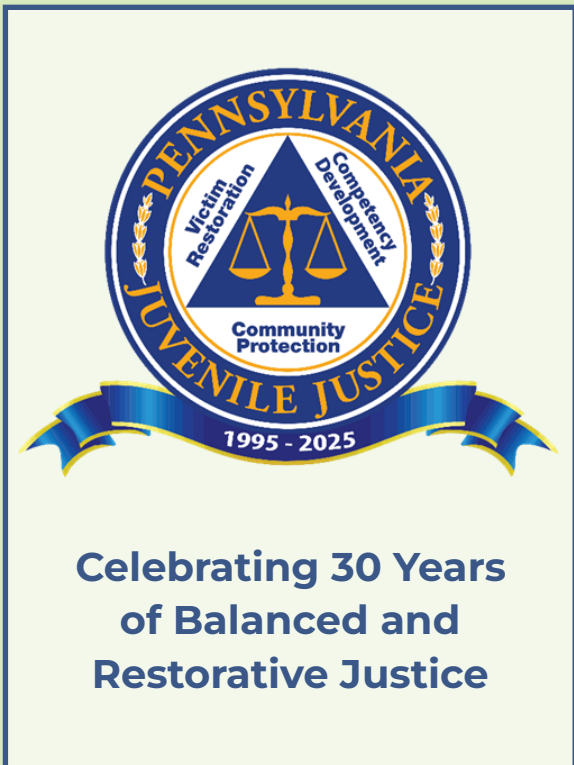
SAVE THE DATE!

NOVEMBER 5 - 7, 2025 HILTON HARRISBURG

**30 Years of Balanced and Restorative Justice:
Through the Eyes of Youth and Families, Victims,
and Juvenile Justice Professionals**



Pennsylvania Grand Canyon



We are pleased to announce room blocks at the Hilton Harrisburg and Crowne Plaza are open. Early reservations are encouraged to secure the contracted rates. Please see below for reservation details.

Hilton Harrisburg

To reserve your room, call **717-233-6000** and provide the GROUP CODE: **JCJC25** to indicate your participation in the Conference. The hotel will confirm your booking.

Crowne Plaza

To reserve your room, call **717-234-5021** and provide the GROUP CODE: **JCJ** to indicate your participation in the Conference. The hotel will confirm your booking.

For all conference details as they become available, visit:

WWW.PA.GOV/AGENCIES/JCJC/PROGRAM-AREAS/ANNUAL-CONFERENCE.HTML

2025 JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION AWARDS COMMITTEE

On January 28, 2025, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) Awards Committee convened to discuss this year's James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice Professional and Youth Award Programs. The 2025 Awards Committee includes existing members Justin Popovich, Committee Chair and Chief Probation Officer, Bradford County Probation and Parole Department; Mary Jo Battle, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Erie County Juvenile Probation Department; Krystle Kowalczyk, Director of Probation Services, Sullivan County and Wyoming County Juvenile Court Services; Michaella Mowers, Victim/Witness Advocate-Juvenile Probation Officer II, Westmoreland County Juvenile Probation Department; Nelton Neal, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, 5th Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Family Division, Juvenile Section; Mark Rhoads, Chief Adult and Juvenile Probation Officer, Forest County Probation Department; Abigail Wilson, Director of Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Education Services, Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services; Angel Stewart, Director of Administration and Grant Programs, JCJC; and Keysla Rodriguez, Juvenile Justice Quality Assurance Specialist, JCJC. In addition to the current members, the Awards Committee welcomed new members Kristi Fields, Chief of Probation Services, Adams County Department of Probation Services/Juvenile Services and Sharla Swint, Deputy Director, Philadelphia Family Court Juvenile Probation.



Front Row (left to right): Sharla Swint, Angel Stewart, Michaella Mowers, Keysla Rodriguez, Kristi Fields. Back Row (left to right): Nelton Neal, Mark Rhoads, Krystle Kowalczyk, Justin Popovich

During the meeting, the Awards Committee reviewed the 2024 Professional and Youth Award Programs and discussed changes and improvements for 2025. In preparation for distribution, the Awards Committee reviewed and updated the award nomination forms. The James E. Anderson Juvenile Justice Youth Scholarship and professional award nomination forms are available on the [JCJC website](#). They also selected the theme for this year's Youth Awards Program as **"Healing My Past to Impact Our Future."** Youth entering the Creative Expression Contest are to submit mixed media (e.g., poster, video, or audio) or written submissions based on their interpretation of this year's theme. The Awards Committee will reconvene this summer to select the professional and youth award winners. The youth award nomination forms will be made available in May 2025.

Please note, all previous professional award submissions that were not winners in their category may be resubmitted for consideration.

2025 James E. Anderson PENNSYLVANIA Conference on Juvenile Justice



Now Accepting Award Nominations

Award Categories Include:

- Chief Juvenile Probation Officer of the Year
- Juvenile Probation Supervisor of the Year
- Juvenile Probation Officer of the Year
- Victim Advocate of the Year
- Outstanding Service Award
- Juvenile Court Support Service Award
- Residential Program of the Year
- Court-Operated Program of the Year
- Community-Based Program of the Year



How to Nominate:

1. Go to www.pa.gov/agencies/jcjc
2. Select "Programs" then "Annual Conference"
3. Fill Out the Nomination Form
4. Submit!

DEADLINE:

JUNE 2, 2025

For questions, contact Angel Stewart at angstewart@pa.gov or
Keysla Rodriguez at keyrodrigu@pa.gov.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection and analysis are powerful tools for informed decision-making. These tools involve the process of collecting, measuring, checking, validating, and analyzing data from various sources, such as the Pennsylvania Juvenile Case Management System (PaJCMS), to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and relevance of empirical information, as well as to analyze past collection and analysis strategies and make necessary changes.

Some of the most common data mistakes found during data collection and analysis are:

Duplicate data – Duplicate records increase the likelihood of distorted analytical outcomes.

Human error – Data entry relies on human input, so when this fails, the data rendered is incorrect. This mistake can occur on both the client and the agency sides of data entry.

Inaccurate and missing data – Inaccurate or incorrect data does not provide a true picture and cannot be used to plan an effective outcome.

Inconsistent data – Mismatches in the same information across data sources tend to happen when working with various sources.

Avoiding common data collection mistakes is essential to ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and usefulness of data. This goal is achieved by defining clear objectives. The quality of the data collected is enhanced when a formal data check process is in place.

For example, the Statistical Evaluation Report, Hearings Without Attorneys Information Report, and Data Integrity Dashboard Error Tracking Report are sent to counties each quarter to resolve any data errors to ensure accuracy prior to compiling the data for the Juvenile Court Annual Report. In addition, meetings with county end users are conducted throughout the year to address the most frequent data entry errors and explain any new updates to the Procedures Manual for Reporting Juvenile Court Dispositions. Finally, features are added, enhanced, or removed within PaJCMS to better assist with data collection.

Please contact the JCJC Help Desk with any questions regarding the Statistical Evaluation Report or any other reports at 717-477-1199 or RA-JCJCHELPDESK@pa.gov.



DID YOU KNOW...

Act 33 of 1995 became effective on March 18, 1996, which restructured the purpose of the Juvenile Act to implement several fundamental changes including balanced attention to community protection, accountability, and competency development.

Call for Presentations

November 5 - November 7, 2025

Hilton Harrisburg

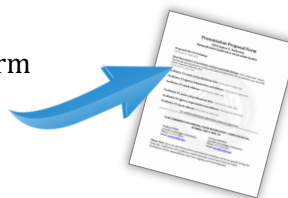
Are you enthusiastic about enhancing Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system with your professional expertise? Do you want to spread your message to 1,000 of your colleagues? We cordially welcome submissions for the 2025 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice, held on November 5-7, 2025, at the Hilton Harrisburg.

The conference focus will celebrate 30 years of Balanced and Restorative Justice in the Pennsylvania juvenile justice system. Each year the conference includes workshops that highlight practices, programs, and initiatives which exemplify the various components of community safety, competency development, victim restoration, and the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy. Workshops are to encourage dialogue among professionals, spark imagination, and discover solutions to our system's ongoing challenges.

This year's conference workshops will take place on Thursday, November 6, 2025. Themes may include but are not limited to professional alliance skills, diversity and/or inclusion, stakeholder engagement, and responsibility factors. **Interested parties should complete and submit the following presentation proposal form by April 15, 2025.**

The 2025 James E. Anderson Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice is sponsored by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and the Juvenile Court Section of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges.

Presentation Proposal Form
Click here to download
or visit:



<https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/jcjc/documents/publications/annualconference/2025-conference-documents/2025%20call%20for%20presentations.docx>

To complete the form and submit online, please visit: <https://forms.office.com/g/p8p0C1Amv8>.



BEAVER COUNTY JUVENILE SERVICES PLANS EVENT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AGED STUDENTS

On February 7, 2025, a meeting was held to discuss a Middle School Juvenile Justice Event hosted by Beaver County Juvenile Services and Tamara Collier, Community Outreach Specialist and Reentry Coordinator & Diversity Coordinator, U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Western District of Pennsylvania, and the leader for Beaver County Community and Law Enforcement Coalition. Invited to this planning meeting were Tiffany York, Esq., Juvenile Court Hearing Officer; Scott Chichy, Beaver Falls School Police; Susan Smith, Youth Ambassador Program (YAP); Kolbe Cole, Franklin Center of Beaver County Fatherhood Initiative; Juvenile Probation Officers Nicole Miller and Deb Landsbaugh; Leo Bouwers, Assistant District Attorney; George Patterson, Public Defender; and Bill Rumbaugh, Juvenile Court Consultant, Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission.

During this brainstorming meeting, Beaver County Juvenile Services Director Charles Rossi discussed how youth coming into the juvenile justice system have misconceptions about the system and little understanding of how the system works. Also, the group explored how to help educate middle school aged youth learn about the juvenile justice system with the hope of preventing these youth from entering the system. Ideas centered around meeting with all the students in a particular grade within one of the middle schools and conducting presentations and scenarios for the youth. Then, students would be asked to give their reactions and deal with or make decisions at certain points. Another strategy would be to have successful youth who have been in the system and the Youth Advisory Board lead the presentations and scenarios with the middle school youth.

The next action steps include juvenile probation officers engaging with the middle school YAP students to get a feel for the best direction for the event to proceed, asking for participation by the Youth Advisory Board, speaking to high school students at their next “Tiger Talk” to continue to gauge the direction for this event, and approaching a middle school’s administration regarding the meeting and gaining their buy-in.

Ms. Miller thanked everyone who attended the first brainstorming meeting for its success and the excitement surrounding the event’s planning.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

March

- 6-7 Officer Safety and Well-Being - Greensburg
- 12 Trauma Responsive Approach: Pathways to Healing - Virtual
- 25 Victim Community Awareness Curriculum Forum - Mechanicsburg
- 26 Needs-Based Plan and Budget for Juvenile Justice Services - Harrisburg
- 28 Digital Health for Youth: Addressing Mental and Physical Well-Being in the Digital World - Virtual
- 31 Juvenile Probation Officer Academy - Harrisburg

April

- 2-3 Motivational Interviewing 101 - Harrisburg
- 9-10 Leadership Academy - State College
- 15 Unconscious Bias - Virtual
- 16 Carey Guides and Brief Intervention Tools - Camp Hill
- 22 Keep the Conversation Going: Sexual Development and Healthy Sexual Relationships - Mechanicsburg
- 23-24 SPEP Level 1 Specialist Training - Virtual
- 28-30 EPICS Training for Juvenile Probation Officers - Harrisburg

May

- 1 Graduated Response Coordinator Learning Community - Virtual
- 6 Ethical Leadership - State College
- 13 Supervisor’s Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) BriefCASE - Mechanicsburg
- 14 Foundations of Juvenile Development Within the Juvenile Justice System - Virtual
- 16 Courtroom Presentation: Come Learn Better Writing and Speaking Sills - Mechanicsburg
- 20 How to Have that Difficult Conversation - Virtual
- 28-30 Victim/Community Awareness Curriculum Training for Facilitators - State College
- 29 SPEP InfoCom - Virtual

For full schedule and registration information, please visit www.jcjcjems.pa.gov.

NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Submitted by Dr. Melissa L. Ricketts, Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Shippensburg University.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. Teen dating violence (TDV)—also called adolescent relationship abuse—affects millions of young people and includes physical, psychological, economic, digital, or sexual abuse, harassment, or stalking of any person ages 12 to 18 in the context of a past or present romantic or consensual relationship.

Teen dating violence can affect individuals of all backgrounds, though young girls experience abuse at disproportionately high rates. Transgender youth are also especially vulnerable. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the U.S., one in three teens will face physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from a partner before reaching adulthood. Such experiences during formative years can have lasting consequences, including negative impacts on physical and mental health, poor academic performance, and an increased risk of substance use and future victimization or perpetration of violence. However, TDV is preventable through early intervention, the promotion of healthy relationships, and expanded access to culturally responsive support services.

The Pennsylvania juvenile justice system plays a pivotal role in addressing TDV by implementing prevention programs, legal interventions, and rehabilitation efforts aimed at mitigating the impact on both youth offenders and victims. Pennsylvania's legal framework includes measures such as the Protection from Abuse Act, which enables minors to obtain protection orders against abusive dating partners, and various provisions under domestic violence statutes addressing harassment, assault, and stalking within teen relationships. Despite these efforts, there remains a need for more explicit legislation that directly addresses TDV among adolescents, as current laws often focus on adult domestic violence cases. Emphasizing a rehabilitative rather than punitive approach, the juvenile justice system employs diversion programs, counseling services, and restorative justice initiatives to educate offenders about healthy relationships and reduce recidivism. Additionally, recommendations have been made for policies that enhance early intervention and support services for both victims and perpetrators, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive strategy to combat TDV.

Despite existing measures, significant challenges remain in addressing TDV. Many cases go unreported or undetected due to factors such as fear, stigma, and a lack of awareness among victims and their communities. Additionally, schools and community organizations often face resource limitations that hinder their ability to provide comprehensive education on topics such as healthy and unhealthy relationships, conflict resolution, bystander intervention, and digital safety, leaving youth more susceptible to TDV. Furthermore, expanding access to essential support services—including counseling, shelters, and legal aid—is crucial to enhancing the effectiveness of intervention and recovery efforts for teen victims.

Teen dating violence is a critical public health and criminal justice issue in Pennsylvania, requiring a collaborative, community-wide response. While the juvenile justice system has made progress in addressing TDV through prevention and rehabilitation, lasting change depends on the collective efforts of families, schools, policymakers, and community organizations. By implementing comprehensive education, legal, and intervention strategies—alongside strong community engagement—Pennsylvania can continue to take meaningful steps toward reducing teen dating violence and creating a safer, more supportive environment for its youth.

Reference

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, January 14). *Teen dating violence*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-teen-dating-violence.html>



PCCYFS

PA COUNCIL OF CHILDREN
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

A UNITED VOICE FOR PROVIDERS

Annual Conference

2025

for Child Welfare, Children's Behavioral Health,
Juvenile Justice & Education Professionals



April 9 & 10, 2025

Best Western Premier

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Keynotes

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Murder Mystery Theatre

Continuing Education Credits

And More!

The Pennsylvania Council of Children Youth & Family Services (PCCYFS) #SWPR004114 is approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors to offer continuing education for social workers, marriage and family therapists and professional counselors. PCCYFS maintains responsibility for the program(s).

www.pccyfs.org | 3425 Simpson Ferry Rd Suite 201, Camp Hill, PA 17011 | 717-651-1725

2025

Crime Victims' Rights Week Poster Contest



pennsylvania
OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK
APRIL 6-12, 2025

KINSHIP
CONNECTING
& HEALING

The Office of Victim Advocate is encouraging high school students across the Commonwealth to compete in a poster challenge to celebrate National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This activity is meant to create awareness and provide an opportunity to discuss the impact of crime on victims and how we can support crime victims in KINSHIP through connectivity that promotes access to services, rights, and healing.

All posters must be received by March 28, 2025. Submissions will be showcased on the OVA Facebook page.

The Rules:

- Each poster must be developed by a student
- All concepts should be based on this year's theme: "KINSHIP: Connecting & Healing"
- Only one submission per student
- Maximum size accepted is equivalent to a 22" x 28" poster board
- You must include a submission entry form with your poster for consideration
- You may email a photo of your poster or send the original to the addresses below

Select posters will be displayed in the PA State Capitol East Rotunda from April 9-11. The winning posters will be announced April 9, 2025.

Email posters or any
questions to:
tagross@pa.gov

Mail posters to:
PA Office of Victim Advocate
Attn: Tara Gross
1101 S. Front St, Suite 5200
Harrisburg, PA 17104



Prizes for the winners consist of:
1st Place \$100 Amazon Gift Card
2nd Place \$75 Amazon Gift Card
3rd Place \$50 Amazon Gift Card

EMPOWERING JUVENILE JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS WITH THE PREVENTION LEARNING PORTAL

The **Prevention Learning Portal (PLP)** is a free online platform offering **asynchronous courses, an eLibrary, and a News & Events page** to support professionals in juvenile justice and other systems across the Commonwealth.

The **PLP** provides essential resources to expand knowledge, develop skills, and enhance capacity to apply evidence-based approaches at work and in practice. By addressing youth, family, and school risk factors early, professionals can prevent more significant challenges in their communities.

Growing Impact & Upcoming Features

With **950+ registered learners, 15 self-paced courses** (13 more in development), and **74 eLibrary resources**, the PLP is a valuable tool. Over **1,100 course completion certificates** have been awarded, and **94% of learners report satisfaction** with course content.

Continuous professional development strengthens the quality of services within juvenile justice, ensuring professionals are equipped with the latest strategies and best practices. By investing in ongoing learning, we enhance outcomes for youth, fostering safer communities and brighter futures.

The PLP supports **workforce development** by focusing on **prevention science and implementation strategies**. A **five-part data series** will launch this year, covering:

- Strengthening programs with logic models
- Measuring program impact
- Data collection, storage, and security
- Effective program communication

Have Course Ideas?

The **PLP team welcomes course suggestions**—contact us at **plp-elearn@psu.edu**. Explore the **PLP today** and enhance your skills to positively impact youth and communities!



This publication is produced monthly by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission. Guest articles are welcome; please submit by email to ra-oajcnews@pa.gov.

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